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"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARDS MEN." — LUKE 11. 14.

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HE THAT HATH SEEN ME, HATH SEEN THE FATHER. JOHN, xiv. 9.

THE Greek word which is here translated *seen* (*eorake*) has, like the English word *to see*, two distinct significations. One is to perceive an external object with the bodily organs of vision, as when we see a human being actually before us. The other signification is to perceive mentally, to have knowledge of a thing, to comprehend truth; and in this case it is nearly synonymous with understanding or intelligence, as in cases like the following—I have *seen* the goodness of the Lord—*mine eyes have seen thy salvation*—*ye see how that by works a man is justified*—when he had *seen* the grace of God—in all which instances the perception spoken of refers, not to the eye, but to the mind; and the object perceived is not a visible external figure, but an abstract truth.

Now it is well known to all who have any knowledge of Scripture phraseology, that there are nearly as many examples of the latter as of the former signification; and the difficulty is, to ascertain to which of these we are to refer the text—whether, as some suppose, we must understand our Saviour to say, that in *seeing* him his disciples had actually seen with their bodily eyes the eternal God; or whether the meaning is that in knowing him and the object of his mission, they had acquired through him a knowledge of the character and will of his father—which is a sentiment exactly similar to a verse preceding, “If ye had known me, ye would have known my father also.”

That the former of these cannot be the true meaning, there is this evidence. In the first place it is impossible. A spiritual being, as God is declared to be, cannot be an object visible to human eyes. We are able to see nothing but what is material—nothing but what may affect our senses by some species of impulse. We can form no conceptions of the nature of immaterial beings, of angels, of seraphs, of any part of that invisible chain of superior intelligences, which are supposed to ascend from man to the throne of God.—

How then can it be imagined for an instant that that ineffable glory, before which angels veil their faces, could be endured by man;—that a being confined within no space, and combining in himself every possible perfection, could be within the grasp of a finite mind?

In the second place, this construction of the text is expressly contradicted by the Bible. We are able to produce several positive assertions of the inspired writers so clear as to place the subject beyond all reasonable dispute. For example—“*No man hath seen God at any time.* The only begotten son which was in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” Here we are told that because the Supreme Being could not be visible by the eye of man, he had sent his son to declare or make him known to the world.—Again; “*The father himself, that hath sent me, hath borne witness of me; ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.*” In another chapter of John’s gospel; “*Every man, that hath heard and hath learned of the father, cometh unto me; not that any man hath seen the Father.*” It is impossible, one would think, not to observe the care visible in this last clause, to prevent any mistake on the part of the disciples—to prevent their supposing for a moment, that they could ever have seen God face to face.

We are taught that this actual vision of the Almighty is a reward reserved for the good in a future existence, when their powers shall be strengthened and enlarged; when they shall be able to see celestial objects and persons as they are now seen, and to know them as they are now known by one another.—“*Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.*” In this life let no man hope for so great a privilege, or believe that any human being has ever enjoyed it; for the Deity has said, “*thou canst not see my face, there shall no man see me and live.*” The being who has said this is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen or can see.

These passages seem sufficiently clear and decisive; but you will probably recollect that there are several instances in the old Testament, in which the Deity is said to have really exhibited himself to human beings—to have displayed his glory before their eyes, as to Abraham, to Moses, and to the elders of Israel; and these may seem perhaps to contradict what has just been advanced. But there is in fact no such contradiction, because what these men saw, was not the invisible God, but some glorious display of light, some material sign or token, which excited in their minds a very strong and solemn idea that his spirit was near them. To Abraham and others he is said to have appeared sometimes in a dream or vision of the night, that is, he excited in them a consciousness of his actual presence, and the ideas which were thus conveyed into their understandings were not mere illusions. Sometimes he appeared to them by means of some visible form like a human figure, or we might say more correctly a figure appeared to them, which was moved and animated by the spirit of God. But this figure which they could see was not the Almighty. This thing thus moved could with no more propriety be called the being who moved it, than an instrument in the hands of one of our species can be called the agent; than the casket which contains a diamond can be called a gem; than the scabbard can be called a sword; than a brazen image can be called a man. In the case of Moses and the elders of Israel, the manifestation of the divine presence was more glorious. They ascended by the command of the Deity to the top of Mount Sinai, and there, says Moses, they saw the God of Israel, and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness. Now by this, we are not to understand that they literally saw the Supreme Being with their bodily eyes, but that there was exhibited before them a most glorious display of celestial effulgence, strong and bright as the eye could endure, and by which they were made sensible that God was there; such a display, as was made to Moses in the bush and was afterward made to our Saviour and his disciples on the Mount of transfiguration. It is evident they saw nothing more, because sometime afterward, we find Moses himself desiring to see the glory of the Lord, and then it was that the Lord said to him 'thou canst not see my face and live.' To gratify however the eagerness of his prophet, he put him into a cave, and, as it is expressed, put his hand over the mouth of the cave, and there passed by a blaze of splendor, of

which a glimpse only was permitted to be seen. If any one doubts whether any thing more than that was seen by the elders on the top of Sinai, let him turn to the 4th chapter of Deuteronomy and there he will find it said expressly, that on this occasion they did not see the deity. "And the Lord," says Moses, "spake unto you out of the midst of the fire, ye heard the voice of the words, but ye saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice." And again; "take heed to yourselves, lest ye make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire."

It appears from this statement that the true God, the father never has been, and never can be visible to mortal eyes, and therefore that the text, *he that hath seen me, hath seen the father*, must not be interpreted in a sense, which directly contradicts these express declarations. Having shown therefore what it does not mean, we shall next inquire what its signification really is. S. C.

#### FAULTS OF UNITARIANS.

*To the Editor of the Liberal Christian*

SIR.—I shall not feel myself to be intruding upon the indulgence which you offer to those who differ from you in opinion, if I request you to insert a few remarks upon the practical errors of Unitarians. With their faith I have no concern—it is a matter for which they are answerable to no human power. I think their principles most favorable to Christian union, and am therefore solicitous that, while they labor sincerely and successfully to correct the errors of others, they should not forget their own.—You I doubt not will cheerfully lend your aid to resist practical dangers, and will not leave the work of reformation half done, wherever your censure falls.

First, I must acknowledge that in many who hold to your sentiments, I do not find a sufficient measure of that charity they are so importunate in claiming for themselves.—That men, who assert the necessity of treating errors with severity, should fail in this respect is mournful enough; but the want of charity in those, who complain of suffering because it is denied them, can hardly be pardoned, for every time they challenge others to remember the obligations of Christian benevolence, they necessarily remind themselves of the solemnity of the duty; and if they do not give what they ask for, they stand self-condemned. I do not refer to the character of their publications, which are

generally fair and manly. I speak of the spirit of individuals who may look upon those who conscientiously differ from them, with jealousy, sometimes with contempt; who ridicule the religious feeling of the orthodox and exult in their ill success—and particularly such as have suffered from the angry zeal of party and are apt to carry their resistance to an excess, which their better judgment would condemn. All this is very natural, but that does not make it right, and Unitarians should be cautioned never to take the name of liberality upon their lips, while any bitterness is in their hearts—never in their resistance of injury to imitate the spirit of their opposers, because in so doing they inevitably give the lie to their own profession, and lay themselves open to the just censure of those who make no such pretensions.

Next. Some who embrace your sentiments, seem to suppose that in so doing they escape from the solemnity of their religious obligations. Every doctrine, I grant is liable to similar perversion. Calvinism, with its regeneration, seems to some to make atonement for past sins and give indulgence for the future; but no one would charge upon that faith the ignorant folly of those who pervert it to their own destruction. No more should we charge upon Unitarianism the delusion of those who think that in divesting religion of its gloom, it removes its terrors, and that it holds out encouragement to offenders by representing Christianity in a mild unrepelling light. But I am convinced that even over some of your number, who should know better, religion loses something of its authority. When you let them free from long established opinions, they seem just let loose from prison, unnaturally excited by breathing purer airs, and while they console themselves with believing that they have embraced the truth, take too little pains to learn what that truth is and what it requires. They hear that many things are unimportant which they have long considered essential, and they go on to suppose that nothing is essential. There is no longer a fanatical restraint on their innocent enjoyment, and they feel no check to their irreligious pleasure. They are told to perform their social duties, and they live in the world as if it were their home. They are told that some ways of extending the reign of Christianity are injurious or useless, and they will not give their aid to any. And thus the avarice that would save its paltry contributions—the vanity that would seem superior by differing with the multitude, and the profligacy that hopes to cast off restraint, shelter themselves under the name of liberality. There are even men, honorable men too, who appear to

think, that to withhold their aid from religious purposes with which they do not entirely agree, and to bear loud and angry witness against mistaken zeal, are the main duties of Christianity. These things bring a reproach on Unitarianism, which it does not deserve, and impose an obligation on those who hold that faith, to redeem it as far as possible from the dangers of being perverted by the weak and unprincipled, either without or within its numbers.

The last, I shall mention, is the conduct of those who after complaining bitterly of being kept out from the privileges of the Church, and insisting upon their right to enjoy them, when once they have obtained what they sought for, lose all their desire of making the profession of Christianity. It is certainly a melancholy inconsistency to complain with fervor and feeling that Christian rights are withheld, and to denounce the spirit of those who withhold them, and yet when once the privilege is obtained and the gates thrown wide open, to refuse, hesitate, or neglect to enter in. Such a conduct naturally leads to the suspicion either that their demand for the privilege arose from the love of opposition, or that they look on Christian communion as a thing only worth contending for, not worth improving or enjoying. It is their duty to remove this impression—for when no evidence of their supernatural conversion is required for admission to the Church, when nothing is demanded but the expression of a desire to perform the service, there seems to be no excuse either to God or man, for persevering in the neglect of so solemn a duty.

These are the faults of some, who call themselves Unitarians, but have in fact no interest in any form of religion, except so far as it can give a subject for argument or passion. The inconsistency of their conduct is proclaimed and pointed out, as a warning and a reproach brought upon their pretended faith, which only belongs to them. If in ordinary times these things may be left to themselves, they cannot be so now; for since the doctrine seems likely to prevail, it should be the care of its defenders, not to extend it only, but to send it forward in its purest and most irreproachable form, to save it from the mistakes of the simple, and the misrepresentations of its enemies. Endeavor to do this, and I shall be glad to see the faith prevailing; for though I do not profess to agree with you in all your opinions, I believe that Christianity in any form, is productive of good, and the principle of universal benevolence, upon which you insist, is more important than all other sentiments united.

## THE NATURE OF THE REFORMATION IN THE 16TH CENTURY.

In the year 1513, the son of Lorenzo de Medici, the Magnificent, the most distinguished family in Florence, was raised to the pontificate, and at his consecration, assumed the name of Leo X. He had been educated for the Church, possessed splendid talents, had acquired all the accomplishments of the age, and was celebrated for classical literature, and for his knowledge in the fine arts. He was highly polished in his manners, and had been accustomed to the most splendid style of living. He manifested a disposition liberally to encourage polite literature; but he was fond of pleasure, loose in his religious character, and his belief of the truth of Christianity was, at least, equivocal.

At this period, the doctrines of Wiccliffe, in England, Waldus, Huss, and others on the continent, had, by the most bloody persecutions, been suppressed; and if the spirit of these reformers was not wholly subdued, their disciples were holden in derision and contempt. When Leo was placed on the Papal throne, the voice of opposition to his spiritual dominion was not heard. The civil governments of Europe were the ministers to support the universal supremacy of the Pope, and the whole community was holden in the most abject spiritual thralldom.

But causes for years had been secretly operating to prepare the human mind for a revolution in the religious establishment of Christendom. Men began to rise from the ignorance and debasement of the dark ages, which succeeded the subversion of the Roman empire. Printing had been in use for almost a century. The writings of the first Christian fathers had been printed, and extensively circulated. Many perused them, and not a few were able to compare the state of the primitive Church with that of their own times; and to perceive that great corruptions and abuses had been introduced. The licentiousness of the clergy became notorious, and the impositions of the Church were heavily felt. But Pope Leo, surrounded by his obsequious cardinals, immersed in pleasure, or engrossed with schemes of aggrandizement, perceived none of these signs of the times; but mistook the universal silence for the spirit of tame submission; and thought that no limit would be put to the means he might adopt to provide a revenue adequate to the accomplishment of all his lofty views.

The Papal treasury had been exhausted by the extravagance of his immediate predecessor. The magnificent cathedral of St. Peter at Rome, was then in part erected, and a large amount of funds was necessary to complete this structure; and the prodigality, the munificence, and the plans of family aggrandizement of the pontiff himself demanded a still greater amount of ways and means. The immense income from all the common resources of the Papal throne, which had almost drained Europe, were found insufficient for his wants, and he had recourse to every measure to fill the treasury, which cunning and cupidity could devise. Among the most corrupt of these measures, was the traffic of indulgences. Leo pushed this trade to its utmost extent. In Germany, he farmed this branch of his revenue to Albert, Elector of Mentz and Archbishop of Magdeburg, who employed Tetzel, a bold monk, to preach and vend these indulgences. The monk executed his commission with the greatest effrontery and scandal. He proclaimed the pardon of all sins, past, present, and to come, to all who would purchase the indulgences of Pope Leo -- asserted that these had more efficacy than the merit of Christ--and declared that he had, by their distribution, saved more souls from hell, than the apostle Peter had, by his preaching, converted to Christianity. This was one essential link in the chain of causes which produced the reformation in Germany, an event the most important and beneficial to the world, that has taken place since the establishment of Christianity. This abuse of every thing sacred--this open violation of all moral obligations, roused the indignation of Martin Luther, a man of the most powerful mind and intrepid character.

Luther was a native of Eisleben, in Saxony. He early discovered an inclination for learning, and was publicly educated at the University of Ursurt. By the force of his own mind, he rose above the scholastick and useless modes of instruction common to his age, and taught philosophy and ethicks on rational principles. Devoting himself to the department of theology, he studied the bible with unwearied diligence, in the original languages, and encouraged the cultivation of the like study in others, as the only sure foundation on which a true knowledge of religion could be built; and in life and conversation he was moral and exemplary. "Having passed his probation in the monastery of Ursurt, he took the monastick vows, and was admit-

ted to priest's orders. His profound learning, the purity of his life, and his knowledge of the scriptures were generally known and applauded, and in the year 1508, Frederick, Elector of Saxony, appointed Luther, then only twenty five years of age, to the professorship of philosophy, and soon after, to that of divinity, in the university of Wittemburg. The duties attached to these offices he discharged with so much ability, and a method so totally different from the usual mechanical and dull forms of lecturing, that he was crowded with pupils from all quarters; and he greatly contributed in raising this university to celebrity. Being at Rome, in the execution of an important commission, Luther there had opportunity to examine the manner in which the Church of Rome was governed, and to observe the deportment of the clergy. This he censured with severity, and particularly the careless and hasty manner which they adopted in performing divine service.—The manner in which they were accustomed to offer up prayers to Almighty God, he declared, excited in his breast sentiments of astonishment and horror.

The infamous proceedings of the monk Tetzel, in vending indulgences, roused Luther to vigorous efforts in opposition to the intolerable abuses of the agents of the Roman pontiff. This may be considered as the commencement of that revolution in the Christian Church, which humbled the pride, and greatly reduced the power of the Papal Hierarchy. In the year 1517, this intrepid apostle of the reformation, with all the energy of his active mind, and all the vehemence of his ardent spirit, from the great Church in Wittemburg, attacked the vile traffic and the vicious lives of those, who were thus deluding their fellow beings in the highest interests of immortality. He brought their doctrines to the test of scripture, and exhorted Christians to seek their salvation by the methods which God had prescribed in the revelation of his will. The fervor and pungency of his appeal to reason and scripture, deeply impressed the minds of his hearers. Multitudes attended his ministrations, and became converts to his doctrines.

Not satisfied with enlightening his countrymen from the pulpit, Luther proceeded to bolder exertions in the cause of Christian truth. He wrote to the Elector Albert, ex-postulating with him on the corrupt opinions and wicked conduct of those, whom he employed in the distribution of indulgences, and

in pathetic language beseeching him to put an end to their abominable traffic and to adopt efficient measures to reclaim the clergy from their profligate lives. But the love of gain was predominant in the mind of Albert, and he was unmoved by the remonstrances of Luther. Not succeeding with the Archbishop, Luther wrote ninety five theses, on the points in controversy, which he proposed as subjects of inquiry and disputation; these he posted up in a Church in Wittemburg, and challenged the learned publicly to appear on a given day, as his opponents, either in person or by writing. No person appearing at the appointed time, Luther transmitted the theses to Pope Leo, with a letter expressing his profound veneration for his holiness, and solemnly protesting his readiness to submit implicitly to the authority of the apostolic see.

It does not appear that Luther at this period entertained the thought of separating himself from the Papal Church, or of denying the Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome.—Thus far the dispute rested with Tetzel and Luther, respecting the power of the pontiff to pardon the sins of men. Luther acknowledged that the Roman pontiff possessed power to remit all the punishments inflicted by the Church against transgressors; but he denied that the Pope was clothed with authority to remit the punishments which God had denounced against the sinner. On the other side, Tetzel asserted that all punishments, present and future, human and divine, were within the power of the Pope to absolve, as vicegerent of Christ. Questions of this nature had before been canvassed in the Church, but the sovereign pontiffs had possessed so much discernment and policy as to leave them unsettled by any decree of the conclave. Had Leo, on this occasion observed the same caution, restrained the scandalous abuses of Tetzel, and enjoined silence on the monks respecting Papal power, it is probable that Luther would have acquiesced, remained a member of the Romish Church, and that his name would not have been transmitted to posterity as a reformer. But Leo, in his imagined security, viewed Luther as an object of insignificance, and took no notice of him.

Luther's theses, in the mean time, were published and spread through Germany; and they every where attracted attention, and were by many applauded.

At length, numerous advocates for the holy Church appeared, and with the utmost asperity attacked the writings and the person of Luther. Supported by Frederick, his sovereign, he undauntedly defended his cause and his character ; and now proceeded so far as to declare, " that if the Pope and cardinals entertained the same opinions with his opponents, and set up any authority against that of scripture, there could be no doubt but that Rome was itself the very seat of Antichrist, and that it would be happy for those countries which should separate themselves from her. *Dr. Bancroft.*



#### UNDERSTANDEST THOU WHAT THOU READEST ?

THE Ethiopean Nobleman, to whom these words were addressed, was perusing a book, which more than all others it behoves us to understand ; and yet which has, more than all others been misapprehended. This certainly is a most singular fact, that the only book, which we believe to be a revelation from heaven, has shared the fate of being least understood. And it is a fact as it seems to me, which sets in a very striking light the folly and wickedness of men. If they had received this communication with simplicity and purity of mind ; if religion had been so familiar to their thoughts as to have been no mystery ; if they had opened the sacred volume with no superstitious and unholy dread, and perused it with the simple understanding and sense that God gave them, and with the earnestness and docility that become the subject, they would not have so darkened the bright and manifest record of truth. But as it is, the unholy fancies and fears of men have spread a mist over its sacred pages, in which much has been obscured and much distorted, and little has been seen distinctly and in its true light. The systems of interpretation, which have been applied to this book, have all been more or less infected with mysticism ; and through its influence, there is reason to think, that even now the most common terms in our sacred writings convey to most minds but a vague and doubtful impression.

These systems of interpretation, the offspring of superstition and pride, might have been added to the causes, mentioned heretofore, of that obscurity, which in the conceptions of most readers attaches to our sacred writings.

These causes, and this prevailing obscurity resulting from them, have impressed me with

the conviction, that we need to think and say much more about the Bible itself—about the chapters and verses and terms that compose it ; more with a view to scrutinize and discriminate and define them. We have many ingenious speculations upon the administration of God's moral government. We have many fine disquisitions about virtue and goodness, and it is well. But we want to know more about the Bible itself. Religious notions without number, of every form and description have currency in the world ; but what saith the scripture ? There are enough to talk, and there are not wanting those who read ; but understandest thou what thou readest ?

In these circumstances, any inquiries that lead us back to the fountain of knowledge, and particularly to an analysis of its qualities, would seem to be worthy of special consideration.

We shall not hesitate therefore, again to invite the attention of our readers to a minute examination of some of the most common terms and phrases in the New Testament.

Two classes of these expressions have been already considered, viz. the appellations given to Christianity, and that language which describes the principal good or benefit which it was designed to communicate, commonly called salvation, redemption, &c. This good has been shewn to be virtue and piety and the happiness resulting from them. It is that good which forms the glory and blessedness of God, and of all perfect beings. Indeed what else is intrinsically and permanently good ? It is true that it is considered sometimes under one aspect in the scriptures and sometimes under another. It is escape from misery. It is happiness. It is the favor of God. But the central principle of all is goodness ; from this all the others flow.

I shall have occasion in pursuing this subject, to notice this distinction again. D.



#### ON REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

WHAT is the service of God ? Or, what does God require of us, as the conditions of his present favor, and his final acceptance ? This is the great inquiry, in answering which, the christian world has been divided into so many sects, and the seamless coat of Christ has been rent into a thousand unseemly fragments. Great numbers of creeds are formed, in open hostility to each other, and all claiming the sanction of God's word for all their

unintelligible, and for all their contradictory expressions and articles. Ask a Roman catholic, what is christianity, and what are the conditions of the final favor of God; and he will refer you to the authority, and worship of his church. Propose the inquiry to a protestant, and all the articles of the creed adopted by his church will be arrayed before you. He will perhaps shut out from hope all who are not elected by the sovereign pleasure of God, even without any foresight of their faith or good works. He will tell you, that all mankind were, for Adam's sin doomed to eternal torment; that some, however, by God's election, are to be saved; that Christ died to satisfy the divine justice in their salvation; and that it is by an almighty and irresistible grace, that God calls, sanctifies and saves those, whom he has thus elected to eternal life. He will tell you that man, by nature, is not only incapable of God's service, or of doing his will, but that he is born an enemy of God, and with a heart at enmity with all goodness; that even before an infant has done any evil, he may be condemned to everlasting burnings; that an unrenewed man is incapable of doing any thing to obtain a renewal of his heart; and that his very prayers and endeavors to please God, while yet he is not thus sanctified, are sin. But because we sometimes see religious zeal running out into these excesses, and because some of its primary principles, as we think, are in direct opposition to those of the gospel, it would be very unjust to infer, that there are not many who adopt these very sentiments, of a truly christian temper and life. Their christian affections and conduct however are derived, not from these peculiarities of their faith, but from the influence of the word and will of God upon them; of that very word and will of God, which are equally acknowledged by many who widely differ from them, as by themselves. They are mistaken, as we think, in several of their views of the character and service of God; and it is particularly in their erroneous conceptions of God, of the nature and condition of man in this world, and of the design of the coming and of the death of our Lord, that the excitements of passion originate, which are mistaken for revivals of religion. And it is through the influence of these mistaken views of religion, that *terror* is employed as the great agent, for accomplishing the purposes of the gospel.

But would you understand, what indeed is christianity, and what are the conditions of the present and the eternal acceptance of God; inquire not of Calvin, nor Arminius, nor of the leader of any sect, nor of any sectarian. The word by which we are to be judged in the last day, is the word that Christ has spoken to us. Let him then be our only master, and his word our only guide. To the gospel let us bring the inquiries, what doth the Lord our God require of us? and, what must we do to be saved? and wherein must the work of religion be revived? Let us bring home its instructions to our hearts; and very much am I mistaken, if they will not convict us of much evil, of great prevailing vices; of great cause of humiliation before God; and will enjoin upon us a reformation, which however it might be scoffed at by enthusiasts who decry good works, would be indeed and in truth a most important and happy revival of religion.

I ask again therefore, what is the service of God? Hear the answer of our blessed Saviour. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment.—The second is like it, namely this. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There are none other commandments greater than these.* And who is prepared to say I have kept these commandments? Let us consider what is necessarily implied in them; and ingenuously inquire if our hearts were under the uncontrolled influence of these commands, whether the most important and salutary changes would not be produced in our affections and tempers, our character and happiness.

Ch. Disciple.

BE NOT DECEIVED.

We should reasonably disbelieve a man who expressed a desire to be *learned*, but never engaged in *study*. We should disbelieve a man, who said he wished to be *rich*, but was neither *enterprising*, *industrious*, nor *frugal*. So too we may doubt the sincerity of a man, and he ought to doubt it himself, who talks much of the beauty of holiness, of the happiness of virtue, the delights of a godly life, and declares that he wishes and intends to be *religious*, unless we see that he sets about the diligent use of those *means*, by which alone he can become so.

## REPENTANCE.

NEXT to having a just view of the doctrine of repentance, it is important to consider the causes of that moral reformation in which it consists. What is it that effectually leadeth the sinner to repentance, which needeth not to be repented of? Is it the fear of punishment? or the hope of reward? Is it a lively sense of his situation and a just conception of the remedy? Or is it the direct operation of the Spirit of God working upon the heart and moulding it according to his will and pleasure.

Every good work and influence, without doubt is either directly or remotely from God, who is all in all. But because all things are ultimately of God, it is not our province to settle the degree, or define the mode of influence specially exerted by him in operations, which we witness and in which we are concerned. We should acknowledge God in all things; but it would be vain in us to attempt to assign his special agency in every action and work in which our own knowledge and power are employed.

I believe that the scheme of causes and effects with their circumstances, at least those which fall within the sphere of human scope and activity, both in the moral and physical world, are to a considerable extent of a complex and variable character; and yet that they are also to a considerable extent regular and connected both in our minds and in fact. With respect to the common affairs of men, agriculture, merchandize, mechanics, it would be thought absurd to refer every thing to divine influence, except so far as we acknowledge that it is God who giveth us all our powers and capacities of action, and that his providence ruleth over all. It would be equally absurd to suppose every event brought about and every effect produced by hidden causes, to which human observation and power does not at all extend. We are sensible that the laws, in obedience to which these things take place, are to a certain point within our knowledge and calculation.—They are not so wholly independent of ourselves, but that we can form some reasonable expectations, concerning them, and make some suitable provisions with respect to them. In fact much of all that can be done and is done by human agents, is done through the instrumentality of means, with which means we are conversant from experience, and can reason, foresee, and predict concerning them. Nevertheless in all that is done in the business

of life, in which we must depend upon the use of our wisdom and free agency, none of the laws or counsels of God are counteracted. All power in heaven and earth is known and believed to be second and subordinate to his power.

Still, notwithstanding the supremacy and completeness of the Divine Power, it is clear there is much which is left for us to do. We are not carried, independently of our own choice and efforts, into the way where our duty and interest lies. These are near us and about us; in our minds and hearts are their springs; they are dictated and confirmed by the circumstances in which we happen to be placed. They come within the compass of our knowledge and power; they give exercise to our prudence and judgement; they may be copied from example; and they are often painfully recommended by the penalties and sufferings incident to their neglect or violation.

In explaining the causes of repentance, nearly the same account is to be given. God has provided for the recovery of sinners by his Providence and by his word.

Every one, in his own personal happiness or misery, experiences to a great degree, the reward or punishment of his virtue or vice. He learns by experience what will advance or degrade him, and what has advanced or degraded himself and others. He learns that virtue and piety are the price of honor and happiness—and the price and the reward are inseparably connected. He learns that dis-honour and suffering are the wages of sin, both deserved and sure. And every impression and every conviction which is produced on his mind by reason and experience, the events of providence or casual reflection are enforced still more powerfully by the word of revelation, in which the nature and consequences of righteousness and sin are described and contrasted.

In these considerations are found the motives to repentance.

The means of religious improvement, which no true penitent will neglect, are a diligent searching of the sacred volume, that he may be better acquainted with the revealed will of God—frequent self examination that he may have a thorough knowledge of his own heart, his secret faults and presumptuous sins—the exercises of private and public prayer to him from whom cometh down every good gift—and constant watchfulness over his actions, words and thoughts.

F.